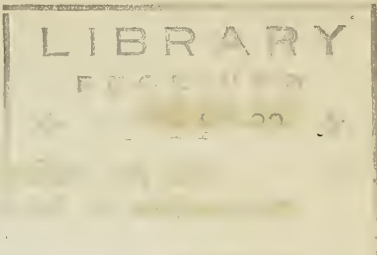


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1755R



THE HOUSEHOLD AND GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, September 20, 1932.

---o---

ANNOUNCER:

Today Miss Ruth Van Deman and Mr. W. R. Beattie have combined the Household and the Garden calendar periods and we are to have a discussion of an all-important topic for this season -- how to store fruits and vegetables so as to have a supply for winter use. In several Household Calendar periods Miss Van Deman and her guest experts have discussed the canning of fruits and vegetables. Today we are to hear about the best methods of storing them in the fresh state. Miss Van Deman will you lead the discussion?

VAN DEMAN:

Gladly, Mr. Salisbury. As you say, we've had canning days and pickling days and jelly making days, on the Household Calendar. Now we come to storage of the fruits and vegetables themselves. Generally this is more of a man's job than a woman's. Every year Mr. Beattie stores all kinds of products from his garden, so he's going to have to do most of the talking today! Mr. Beattie, do you think it pays to store home-grown fruits and vegetables?

BEATTIE:

I certainly do. Especially this year when so many dependent people need food. I've been in this gardening game ever since my boyhood days. Furthermore, I am of Scotch descent and I don't believe in letting anything go to waste. Yes, Miss Van Deman, I think it will pay to store the home-grown products wherever conditions make it possible.

VAN DEMAN:

Well, just what do you mean by conditions?

BEATTIE:

Mainly temperature. Success in storage of fruits and vegetables depends largely on providing the proper storage temperatures. Success in the warmer parts of the country depends mainly on keeping the products cold; in the colder sections on keeping them from freezing during cold snaps. In some sections people use what we term "natural storage," keeping the products reasonably near the proper temperature by ventilating the storage room or cellar. People have to depend upon "cold storage" in sections where they can't control the temperature by ventilation.

(over)

VAN DEMAN:

Can you really keep the ordinary cellar cold enough to store fruits and vegetables in it?

BEATTIE:

In the colder parts of the country, yes. Especially, if you partition off the cooler part of the cellar and make at least two openings to admit cold air and let out the warm air.

VAN DEMAN:

But suppose you have a furnace or a heater of some kind in your cellar. What then?

BEATTIE:

In that case cover the furnace pipes with asbestos paper or some other fire-proof insulating material and then partition off a portion of the cellar for storage purposes. I have a storeroom in the northeast corner of my house cellar. This room is separated from the main portion of the cellar by a double board partition with waterproof building paper between the layers of boards.

VAN DEMAN:

Do you have shelves or bins for storing your fruits and vegetables?

BEATTIE:

Both. I have shelves on the side and end where the wooden partitions are located, also high tables about 30 inches wide along the other side and end against the concrete outer walls of the cellar. I use the shelving for the storage of canned goods, the tables for bottles or kegs of cider and vinegar and for baskets of apples and other fruits. Under the tables are the barrels and the bins for storing potatoes, carrots, and beets. I store also dahlia and canna roots in this cellar.

VAN DEMAN:

Where do you store your cabbage, turnips, and celery?

BEATTIE:

In trenches or pits in the garden. It is difficult to keep the storage cellar cool enough for cabbage, turnips, and celery. Besides, cabbage and turnips are liable to become too smelly for keeping in the house cellar. In case you have a cellar under an outbuilding or in the barn you might store the cabbage and turnips there.

Celery is best stored in a trench outside and well covered by boards and earth.

VAN DEMAN:

At what temperature do you aim to keep your storage cellar, Mr. Beattie?

BEATTIE:

As close to 38 or 40 degrees as possible. Of course, it is difficult to get the temperature that low early in the fall but as cooler weather comes, we gradually lower the temperature in the storage cellar by ventilating freely at night and then closing the openings during the warm part of the day.

VAN DEMAN:

How do you keep the temperature of your storage cellar from going too low in extremely cold weather?

BEATTIE:

That's easy, Miss Van Deman. We simply close the outside ventilators tightly and open the door into the main portion of the cellar.

VAN DEMAN:

I suppose you keep a thermometer hanging in your storage cellar and glance at it every day or two?

BEATTIE:

As a rule, yes. If we don't happen to have a thermometer handy we simply set a pan of water on the table in the coldest corner of the storage cellar. Water will begin to flake over and freeze before any of the fruits or vegetables will freeze. Most fruits and vegetables do not begin to freeze until after the temperature falls two or three degrees below the freezing point of water.

VAN DEMAN:

You mentioned storing potatoes, carrots, beets and certain fruits in your cool storage cellar; where do you store sweet potatoes, squashes and pumpkins?

BEATTIE:

Oh, I store those on shelves near the furnace in the main part of my cellar. Sweet potatoes, squashes and pumpkins require a storage temperature of about 55 degrees with a fairly dry atmosphere. I've stored sweet potatoes very successfully in a vacant room over the kitchen which had a ventilator in the kitchen ceiling.

VAN DEMAN:

How about onions? Is there anything in the idea that the odor of onions will injure the flavor of other vegetables?

BEATTIE:

Well, onions store best at a temperature near freezing with enough ventilation to keep them perfectly dry. I don't believe there is much to the report that onions will impair the flavor of other vegetables unless they come in direct contact or the onions decay. Onions will injure the flavor of apples and other fruits if you don't keep them well separated. Turnips and cabbage are more liable to injure the flavor of stored products than onions.

VAN DEMAN:

Is that why you recommend storing turnips and cabbage in outdoor pits?

BEATTIE:

Yes, that's one reason. Another reason is that they keep better when buried in pits or banks. The only objection to storing them in pits is that they are hard to get at in the winter when the ground is frozen. Our southern folks don't have that trouble, in fact they can often leave their vegetables right in the garden until they want them for use, or they can store them in very simple outdoor cellars or in storm cellars.

VAN DEMAN:

Speaking of outdoor cellars, Mr. Beattie, do you think it would pay the average home gardener who has a rather large quantity of fruits and vegetables to store, to build an outside storage cellar for them?

BEATTIE:

Yes, Miss Van Deman, I do. If an outdoor storage cellar is properly constructed of stone, cement, bricks or cement blocks laid in cement mortar it will last for generations. Quite often these cellars can be built into the side of a bank or a hill with the door on the lower side and a ventilator flue in the top. If a driveway passes the door it is easier to take the fruits and vegetables from the garden or orchard to the cellar. It is usually easier to control the temperature of an outside cellar than of a storage room underneath the house. In the Northeastern States there are thousands of these outside storage cellars. In the Western States sod houses are used for storage purposes. Storm cellars built of stone and earth and about two-thirds under ground, make excellent storage places for canned goods also for fresh fruits and vegetables.

VAN DEMAN:

Now, Mr. Beattie, you've been talking mainly about rooms partitioned off in the house cellar, outdoor cellars, and storm cellars. Suppose you don't have a cellar and can't afford to build one just now for storing fruits and vegetables? What would you suggest?

BEATTIE:

That's an easy one to answer, Miss Van Deman. You can store apples and most kinds of vegetables in outdoor banks or pits. I lived on one place where I didn't have a cellar so I dug a square hole in a well drained spot in my garden

and set a large store box into it, then I divided the storebox into sections and filled each section with one kind of vegetable. The box was about three-fourths underground and I tamped the soil around it and placed a cover on top. Until the weather became too cold I kept the cover raised a trifle to give the vegetables air. When cold weather set in, I spread straw over the cover then I added a layer of soil and over this a roof of boards to shed the rain. I also dug a ditch all around my storage pit to carry off the water. A piece of 4-inch tile was placed in one corner of the box and extended above ground for ventilation.

VAN DEMAN:

Did you put all kinds of vegetables in this storage box?

BEATTIE:

Yes, all except onions and tomatoes. We stored our onions in the garage and the green tomatoes in a cool upstairs room that we were not using.

VAN DEMAN:

How long did you leave the vegetables in the outdoor pit?

BEATTIE:

Until January, then we opened the pit about once every week or ten days and took out a supply of vegetables as we needed them.

VAN DEMAN:

You mentioned storing green tomatoes; is that practicable?

BEATTIE:

Yes indeed. The proper way is to gather the full grown but green tomatoes just before the first killing frost. Sometimes I gather my green tomatoes late at night when I see that the frost is going to get them. Then I spread them out to ripen on a table in the warmer part of my cellar where the temperature is about 60 degrees. We often have ripe tomatoes until after Christmas.

VAN DEMAN:

Well, Mr. Beattie, I see Mr. Salisbury signaling that time's up. If anybody wants more information about storing fruits and vegetables, I know you'll be glad to answer letters.

Now next week Mrs. Carpenter will be here at the Household Calendar hour to talk about food for children, for school boys and girls especially.

Goodbye for this time.

